

IN THE CLAIMS

1. (Canceled)
2. (Previously presented) The system of claim 76, wherein the user is automatically entered by the host system in the sweepstakes after determining eligibility based on a number of factors including at least one of age and location, and wherein a maximum number of points the user can accumulate in one day is fixed.
3. (Previously presented) The system of claim 76, wherein the host computer system stores registration information pertaining to the user, wherein a spoof-resistant unique identifier of the user is written in a persistent cookie on a computer of the user and is used to allocate points, and wherein a transient cookie having last location information is processed to detect fraud.
4. (Previously presented) The system of claim 76, wherein the user receives one entry in the sweepstakes for each point the user has been awarded after a redundant check is performed in both a counting bone tracking module of the host computer and a database server of the host computer.
5. (Previously presented) The system of claim 76, wherein the user is awarded one or more points for accessing a feature of the webpage.

6. (Previously presented) The system of claim 76, wherein the user is awarded one or more points for making the webpage the user's home page.
7. (Previously presented) The system of claim 76, wherein the user is awarded one or more points for signing up for a service offered by the host computer system.
8. (Previously presented) The system of claim 7, wherein the service is email.
9. (Previously presented) The system of claim 76, wherein the point value associated with at least one of the plurality of hyperlinks is displayed on the webpage.
10. (Previously presented) The system of claim 76, wherein the point value for each of the plurality of hyperlinks is displayed on the webpage.
11. (Previously presented) The system of claim 76, wherein the host computer system stores the table containing, for each hyperlink on the webpage for which at least one point is awarded, a number of at least one point associated with the hyperlink.

12. (Previously presented) The system of claim 76, wherein the number of points awarded to the user is displayed on a user computer system when the user computer system accesses the webpage and the host computer system causes the displayed number of points to be updated substantially concurrently with an award of additional points.

13. (Previously presented) The system of claim 76, further comprising a database server storing a database; the database storing point information relating to the user.

14. (Previously presented) The system of claim 13, wherein:

the host computer system stores the table containing, for each hyperlink for which points are awarded, a number of at least one point associated with the hyperlink;

the number of awarded points is displayed on a user computer system and the host computer system causes the displayed number of points to be updated after an award of additional points; and

the host computer system transmits the points awarded to the user to the database server at least once a day.

15. (Previously presented) The system of claim 14, wherein the points are transmitted to the database server asynchronously to reduce bottlenecks between a web server and the database server.

16. (Previously presented) The system of claim 76, further comprising:
a third-party computer system hosting a third-party website, wherein
- (i) a user computer system accessing the webpage can be connected to the third-party computer system via one of the plurality of hyperlinks; and
 - (ii) the host computer system awards at least one point to the user for accessing the one of the plurality of hyperlinks that directs the user to the third-party website.
17. (Canceled)
18. (Canceled)
19. (Previously presented) The method of claim 71, further comprising
automatically entering the user in the sweepstakes after determining eligibility based on a number of factors including at least one of age and location, and wherein a maximum number of points the user can accumulate in one day is fixed.
20. (Previously presented) The method of claim 71, further comprising::
storing registration information pertaining to the user;
generating a spoof-resistant unique identifier of the user;

writing the spoof-resistant unique identifier in a persistent cookie on a computer of the user; and

using, but the host computer, the persistent cookie to allocate points.

21. (Previously presented) The method of claim 71, wherein the user receives one entry in the sweepstakes for each point awarded to the user after a redundant check is performed in both a counting bone tracking module of the host computer and a database server of the host computer, and wherein a transient cookie having last location information is processed to detect fraud.

22. (Previously presented) The method of claim 71, wherein the user is awarded one or more points for accessing a feature of the webpage.

23. (Previously presented) The method of claim 71, wherein the user is awarded one or more points for making the webpage the user's home page.

24. (Previously presented) The method of claim 71, wherein the user is awarded one or more points for signing up for a service offered by a host system.

25. (Previously presented) The method of claim 24, wherein the service is email.

26. (Previously presented) The method of claim 71, further comprising:

displaying the number of awarded points on a user computer system associated with the user, wherein the displayed number of points is updated substantially concurrently with an award of additional points.

27. (Previously presented) The method of claim 71, further comprising:

displaying the number of awarded points on a user computer system associated with the user, wherein the displayed number of points is updated when additional points are awarded.

28. (Previously presented) The method of claim 71, further comprising:

storing the table containing, for each hyperlink for which at least one point is awarded, a number of at least one point associated with the hyperlink.

29. (Previously presented) The method of claim 28, further comprising:

displaying the number of points associated with the at least one hyperlink on the webpage.

30. (Previously presented) The method of claim 71, further comprising:

storing a database on a database server, wherein the database stores point information relating to the user.

31. (Previously presented) The method of claim 30, further comprising:

storing a table containing, for each hyperlink on the webpage for which points are awarded, a number of points associated with the hyperlink;

displaying the number of awarded points on a user computer system associated with the user, wherein the displayed number of points is updated substantially concurrently with an award of additional points; and

transmitting the points awarded to the user to the database server at least once a day.

32. (Previously presented) The method of claim 31, wherein the points are transmitted to the database server asynchronously to reduce bottlenecks between a web server and the database server.

33. (Previously presented) The method of claim 71, further comprising:

allowing the user to connect to a third-party website via a hyperlink on the webpage, wherein said hyperlink is one of said plurality of hyperlinks; and

awarding at least one point to the user for accessing at least one feature of the third party website.

34. (Previously presented) The method of claim 76, further comprising:

connecting the user to a third-party website; and

awarding points to the user for accessing features of the third-party website.

35. (Canceled)

36. (Previously presented) The computer code of claim 81, further performing:

automatically entering the user in the sweepstakes after determining eligibility based on a number of factors including at least one of age and location, and wherein a maximum number of points the user can accumulate in one day is fixed.

37. (Previously presented) The computer code of claim 81, further performing:

storing registration information pertaining to the user;
generating a spoof-resistant unique identifier of the user;
writing the spoof-resistant unique identifier in a persistent cookie on a computer of the user; and
using, but the host computer, the persistent cookie to allocate points..

38. (Previously presented) The computer code of claim 81, wherein the user receives one entry in the sweepstakes for each point awarded to the user after a redundant check is performed in both a counting bone tracking module of the host computer and a database server of the host computer, and wherein a transient cookie having last location information is processed to detect fraud.

39. (Previously presented) The computer code of claim 81, wherein the user is awarded one or more points for accessing a feature of webpage.

40. (Previously presented) The computer code of claim 81, wherein the user is awarded one or more points for making the webpage the user's home page.

41. (Previously presented) The computer code of claim 81, wherein the user is awarded one or more points for signing up for a service offered by the host system.

42. (Previously presented) The computer code of claim 41, wherein the service is email.

43. (Previously presented) The computer code of claim 81, further performing:

displaying the number of awarded points, wherein the displayed number of points is updated substantially concurrently with an award of additional points.

44. (Previously presented) The computer code of claim 81, further performing:

displaying the number of awarded points on the user computer system, wherein the displayed number of points is automatically updated when additional points are awarded.

45. (Previously presented) The computer code of claim 81, further performing:

displaying on the webpage a number of at least one point associated with at least one hyperlink displayed on the webpage.

46. (Previously presented) The computer code of claim 45, further performing:

displaying the number of awarded points on the user computer system, wherein the displayed number of points is updated substantially concurrently with an award of additional points.

47. (Previously presented) The computer code of claim 81, further performing:

storing a database on a database server, wherein the database stores point information relating to the user.

48. (Previously presented) The computer code of claim 47, further performing the steps of:

storing a table containing, for each hyperlink on the webpage for which at least one point is awarded, a number of at least one point associated with the hyperlink;

displaying the number of awarded points on the user computer system, wherein a host computer system causes the displayed number of points to be updated substantially concurrently with an award of additional points; and

transmitting the points awarded to the user to the database server at least once a day.

49. (Previously presented) The computer code of claim 48, wherein the points are transmitted to the database server asynchronously to reduce bottlenecks between a web server and the database server.

50. (Previously presented) The computer code of claim 81, further performing connecting the user computer system to a third-party web site; and awarding points to the user for accessing features of the third-party website.

51. (Previously presented) The computer code of claim 48, further performing:

connecting the user computer system to a third-party website; and awarding points to the user for accessing features of the third-party website.

52-70. (Canceled)

71. (Previously presented) A method of entering a user in a sweepstakes comprising:

providing a website for access by a user, the website including a plurality of hyperlinks to services and webpages in the website, and each of the plurality of hyperlinks having an associated point value indicative of any number of points the user can get for clicking on the hyperlink, wherein at least two hyperlinks of the plurality of hyperlinks have different associated point values, the associated point values for the plurality of hyperlinks being stored in look-up table stored in a web server associated with the website;

receiving a request that indicates that the user has clicked on one of the plurality of hyperlinks;

determining a point value associated with the one of the plurality of hyperlinks by looking up the associated point value in the look-up table;

awarding, based on the point value associated with the one of the plurality of hyperlinks, at least one point to the user as a result of the user clicking on the one of the plurality of hyperlinks; and

awarding, based on a predetermined number of at least one point awarded to the user for clicking on the one of the plurality of hyperlinks, at least one entry in a sweepstakes.

72. (Previously presented) The method of claim 71, wherein a point value associated with one of the plurality of hyperlinks is displayed on the webpage in proximity to where the one of the plurality of hyperlinks is displayed on the webpage.

73. (Previously presented) The method of claim 71, wherein point values associated with respective hyperlinks in the plurality of hyperlinks are displayed on the webpage in proximity to where their respective hyperlinks in the plurality of hyperlinks are displayed on the webpage.

74. (Previously presented) The method of claim 71, wherein the plurality of hyperlinks includes a hyperlink to a third-party webpage and wherein the host computer system awards at least one point to the user for accessing the hyperlink to the third-party webpage.

75. (Previously presented) The method of claim 71, further comprising:
storing the table containing, for each hyperlink of the plurality of hyperlinks, a number of at least one point associated with the hyperlink.

76. (Previously presented) A sweepstakes system, comprising:
a host computer system hosting a website, wherein the website includes a plurality of hyperlinks to services and webpages in the website and each of the

plurality of hyperlinks has an associated point value indicating any number of points a user can get for clicking on the hyperlink; and

a look-up table stored in the host computer system, the look-up table storing the associated point values for the plurality of hyperlinks,

wherein at least two hyperlinks of the plurality of hyperlinks have different associated point values;

wherein the host computer system receives a request that indicates that the user has clicked on one of the plurality of hyperlinks;

wherein the host computer system determines a point value associated with the one of the plurality of hyperlinks by looking up the point value in the look-up table;

wherein the host computer system awards at least one point to the user as a result of the user clicking on the one of the plurality of hyperlinks; and

wherein the user is given a number of at least one entry in a sweepstakes based on a predetermined number of points the user has been awarded for clicking on the one of the plurality of hyperlinks.

77. (Previously presented) The system of claim 76, wherein a point value associated with one of the plurality of hyperlinks is displayed on the webpage in proximity to where the one of the plurality of hyperlinks is displayed on the webpage.

78. (Previously presented) The system of claim 76, wherein point values associated with respective hyperlinks in the plurality of hyperlinks are displayed on the webpage in proximity to where their respective hyperlinks in the plurality of hyperlinks are displayed on the webpage.

79. (Previously presented) The system of claim 76, wherein the plurality of hyperlinks includes a hyperlink to a third-party webpage and wherein the host computer system awards at least one point to the user for accessing the hyperlink to the third-party webpage.

80. (Cancelled)

81. (Previously presented) Computer code embedded in a storage medium performing:

providing a website for access by a user, the website including a plurality of hyperlinks to services and webpages in the website, and each of the plurality of hyperlinks having an associated point value indicative of any number of points the user can get for clicking on the hyperlink, wherein at least two hyperlinks of the plurality of hyperlinks have different associated point values, the associated point values for the plurality of hyperlinks being stored in look-up table stored in a web server associated with the website;

receiving a request that indicates that the user has clicked on one of the plurality of hyperlinks;

determining a point value associated with the one of the plurality of hyperlinks by looking up the associated point value in the look-up table;

awarding, based on the point value associated with the one of the plurality of hyperlinks, at least one point to the user as a result of the user clicking on the one of the plurality of hyperlinks; and

awarding, based on a predetermined number of at least one point awarded to the user for clicking the one of the plurality of hyperlinks, at least one entry in a sweepstakes.

82. (Previously presented) The system of claim 71, wherein the awarded points are not used to redeem merchandise or prizes.

83. (Previously presented) The system of claim 76, wherein the awarded points are not used to redeem merchandise or prizes.

84. (Previously presented) The system of claim 81, wherein the awarded points are not used to redeem merchandise or prizes.

85. (Previously presented) A method of entering a user in a sweepstakes comprising:

providing a website for access by a user, the website including a plurality of hyperlinks to services and webpages in the website, and each of the plurality of hyperlinks having an associated point value indicative of any number of

points the user can get for clicking on the hyperlink, wherein at least two hyperlinks of the plurality of hyperlinks have different associated point values, the associated point values for the plurality of hyperlinks being stored in look-up table stored in a web server associated with the website;

receiving a request that indicates that the user has clicked on one of the plurality of hyperlinks;

determining a point value associated with the one of the plurality of hyperlinks by looking up the associated point value in the look-up table;

awarding, based on the point value associated with the one of the plurality of hyperlinks, at least one point to the user as a result of the user clicking on the one of the plurality of hyperlinks; and

exchanging automatically a predetermined number of at least one point of the awarded points for at least one entry in a sweepstakes.